

Survey data essential to establishing benchmark for pharmacists

Alabama Medicaid officials hope that pharmacists throughout the state of Alabama will participate in a statewide survey that will enable the Agency to establish a benchmark that can be used to compensate pharmacists for the professional services they provide to Medicaid recipients.

"It is critically important that all pharmacists participate in this survey because the data collected will be used to determine a statistically valid, true cost of dispensing of medications under the Alabama Medicaid program," said Commissioner Carol H. Steckel.

Now underway, the Cost of Dispensing Survey asks the state's pharmacists to submit comprehensive data regarding staffing, overhead and other cost information electronically or by hard copy before May 18, 2008. The survey instrument and instructions, developed in close coordination with pharmacy-related organizations is being administered by Health Information Designs (HID) under a contract with the state Medicaid Agency.

The surveys were mailed to all independent pharmacies actively enrolled in Alabama Medicaid during the month of April; surveys for the retail/chain pharmacies were submitted to their respective corporate offices for completion. A toll-free help desk was made available for assistance, as well as a "Question/Answer Session" was held on Sunday, April 27 to allow pharmacists to ask questions related to the survey. After the statistical review period, HID is expected to report its findings to Medicaid by mid-summer. Commissioner Steckel has committed to the pharmacy associations a full report as soon as possible.

"The impact of this effort will be felt for years to come," Commissioner Steckel emphasized. "We appreciate the support and involvement of the pharmacy associations in developing the survey as well as encouraging the participation of their members."